1:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
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793 Caleoar he visited us twice, and on neither occasion did he speak, except when spoken to, unless it was to make some remark, in very few words, and in a low tone of voice, to some of his attendants. His dress consisted of a white shirt, not over clean, a woven cotton breech-cloth, a bright-red handkerchief, tied in a roll around his head, and a magnificent necklace [124] of four strands of large tiger's teeth. He sold me two of the strings for half-a-dollar, and I presented him with some trifles, among which was the rather suggestive article, a bar of soap. He accepted them without any acknowledgment. But then they don't know how to say, "thank you."

767 793 Next in importance are the *Tsu'-gure*. These are the ordinary priests, and their duties are confined to officiating at the feast for the dead. Like the preceding, they are hereditary; only members of one or two families can become priests, and these seem to have all descended from a common ancestor. I have already described the performances of the *Tsu'-gur* at the death-feast of Santiago, and there is nothing to add in that connection. Other feasts only differ in the less degree of profusion and the shorter time they occupy. But there is one circumstance of which I have said little, and that has always seemed to me mysterious. Unfortunately, from no want of effort on my part, I was not successful in investigating this more thoroughly. The songs of these priests are in a language, dialect, 198 or jargon, whichever it may be called, in great part unintelligible to the uninitiated. Some words used are in the vernacular; but many of the nouns are peculiar. *Si-bu*, or God, has at least twenty names; many natural objects have names peculiar to the priests, and the difference is so great that not only I, with my imperfect knowledge of the language, but Mr. Lyon, who speaks it as well as an Indian, could not understand even the purport of the songs. These songs are taught by rote to the young candidates to the priesthood, and are always rehearsed by the priests apart, before being sung. I made several efforts to obtain a vocabulary, but in each case was defeated, rather by the want of understanding on the part of the priest, than from any unwillingness to impart what they knew. At last I made an agreement with the most intelligent and best informed of them. He was to visit me at a certain time and answer all my questions —for a consideration. But a severe attack of rheumatism prevented his coming and lost me the last chance. I have no theory to offer as to the origin of this singular fast. But two explanations however, seem possible. Either the whole thing is an invention, which I think hardly probable, or the system is an exotic, and the songs are in the original language of the missionary who introduced it. I can hardly express my regret at failing to obtain some clue to so interesting a problem.

756 791 Finally come the *Awas*, sorcerers, or doctors. This is an open profession, and since it requires but little preparation, gives certain privileges and standing, and brings occasional emoluments, it is pretty numerously filled. The fellows are an arrant set of quacks, and I do not believe there is a single one who acts in good faith. Nevertheless, the people as a rule

1:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
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believe in them. Some of the more intelligent or more civilized of the Indians, those who have been most in contact with foreigners, take foreign medicines when sick, but they are the exceptions. Their method of purifying an unclean person has already been described under the heads of child-birth and uncleanness. They also claim to bring or drive away rain. To do this, the doctor must have a pipe full of tobacco, or a cigar. He goes into the open air, smokes, blows the smoke in certain directions, calling out in an imperative tone of voice, "Rain, go to—" whatever place he may see fit to designate. Once when prisoners between two swollen rivers, forced to wait for them to fall low enough for us to ford; one of our few means of amusement was to give one of these fellows, in our suite, a pipe full of tobacco, and set him to clearing up the weather. He would go outside of our little hut, and between the puffs of smoke would call out, "Rain, go to Panama," "go to Chiriqui," "go to Cartago," in short, to every remote place of which he happened to know the name. It took him ten days before his efforts were crowned with success, and when ultimately the blue patches did begin to appear in the sky, he had the effrontery to calmly claim it as his doing! They also claim to "blow" a proposed route of travel, so as to drive away snakes and bring good luck on the route. In this case, the *modus operandi* is practically the same as for the weather. But their master efforts are when charming away sickness. To see the process, two of my companions feigned sickness and called in the services of one the doctors. He caused each one to procure a live chicken. Catching the animal by the neck and heels he made passes all over the body of the patient, in every direction. Any small animal will answer. Sloths, opossums, even young alligators are used, and are said to be equally efficacious.

After some minutes of this manipulation, he lighted a pipe and blew tobacco-smoke at them. Having given them numerous injunctions about diet, such as forbidding the use of coffee, tobacco, pepper, and salt for a day or two, he went outside the house, and spent half the night seated under an orange tree, singing a doleful ditty, enlivened at irregular periods by unearthly howls and groans. His fee for all this was, in addition to the two fowls, used in the ceremony, and which was all he would have received from an Indian, sixty cents from one and forty from the other; the fees being graduated by the gravity of the supposed infirmities. These doctors claim that their powers are based on the magic merits of certain charms they carry about with them. These charms are supposed to be calculi, extracted from the viscera of animals. Our friend, who tried to change the weather, possessed three of these. One purported to be from the liver of a sloth, another from the bladder of some other animal, &c. I examined them with a glass, and am convinced that they were mere fragments of little calcareous veins, common in the metamorphic rocks of the country, and which had been ground smooth by friction. My little knowledge of medicine, and a moderately well-supplied medicine-case, enabled me to make numerous cures, and of course I soon

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Gabb[8] speaks of three classes of shamans—the *usékara*, or "high priest"; the *tsûgur* (*tsuku*), who has charge of the ceremonies for the dead; and the *awa*, doctor or sorcerer, who cures diseases and controls the rain. He says that these latter treat diseases by making passes over the body of the patient with a sloth, opossum, alligator, or even a chicken. Their powers are based on the magic potency of calculi declared to be extracted from the viscera of animals. They bleed their patients with small lancets and give a counter irritant by beating the affected part with nettle leaves. 756 [791] [767]

Polygyny was practised in Gabb's time. The husband, he says, went to live with his father-in-law, or, if not, he bought his release with presents of live-stock in lieu of his services. 595 591

MATERIAL CULTURE

Habitations.—Several native types of dwellings still survive among the Bribri. The more usual variety is sideless, rectangular or oval in ground-plan, with a convex or 342

825 and drink and eat with the people. He was
773 always dressed as an old man, and none knew him on these visits. He came incognito so that he could find out what in truth was passing amongst his people. Although the Indians say that formerly the Hill was a gathering place for their secret tribal meetings, no Indians will go there today, even though there are supposedly wild cattle there, and cattle are economicaly very important to the *Boruca*. This cattle is held to be the property of "Tatica Cuazarn," and cannot be touched. The *Boruca* recount that one of them went to the Hill hunting, and saw a man bathing. He started to shoot the man, but his gun wouldn't go off. This man was, of course, "Tatica Cuazarn." Cuazarn has a son who is called Sankrao, and who lives in the mountains of Golfo Dulce.

778 North and west of Boruca, there are certain lagoons which the Indians do not like to pass, and never will go by them if they are accompanied by dogs. One of these lagoons is the "Laguna de Danta." Here, "Mamram" is supposed to dwell. "Mamram" in Boruca signifies witchery.

224 If one goes hunting, it is not good to say to him, "God be with you," because one will have bad luck.

756 **Sickness, Curing, and Shamanism.** Shamanism as such is not practised any longer amongst the *Boruca*. Formerly the *Boruca* had real shamans, whom they called *bruk-bri*, but they have long since disappeared. The power of the shaman, however, is still respected, and when a grave sickness appears, or a great misfortune affects the tribe or village, the *bruk-bri* is sent for from some of the *Talamanca* peoples, chiefly the *Cabécares*. These peoples call the shaman, *sukia*, and the one who travels to Boruca is known as the *cacique sukia*, the title being derived from the word for shaman and the widespread Costa Rican word for chieftain. The *cacique sukia* is held in deadly respect by the Indians. Chicha, as well as the most attractive girl in town are offered to him on his visits. When curing, the *sukia* stays outside behind the
[755] house, all night, and smokes incessantly. He then enters and blows smoke on the patient. The *sukia* does not accept money, and only at times will take presents of a pig or food.

[p. 25-B]

756 *Curanderas* or female witch doctors, for whom no word exists in the Boruca language, are part of the community. However, the lore is handed down from mother to daughter, with the result that the women of certain families are famous for curing powers, whereas other women of the community have none of this learning. Along with a more than general knowledge of herbs, roots, and plant life, the witch doctor must have a therapeutic sense combined with an instinctive knowledge of psychology. For this reason, in spite of the fact that the witch doctor passes her secrets on to all of her daughters, only the one or ones who are lucky enough to have such qualities practise. At times, when there is no female offspring, or when none is suited to practise, the *curandera* has been known to adopt a girl and train her to follow in her trade.

The witch doctors do not receive the same reverence that the *sukias* receive, even though the witch doctors are *Boruca* Indians and have more opportunity to practise on the people. This, and the fact that the witch doctors are women, while the *sukias* are male, may, of course, be the very reason why they are not feared. At times, however, the *sukia* has been known to teach the witch doctor some of his secrets, and it is certain that the *curandera* is highly respected by both sexes. Although the *curandera* is principally interested in female sicknesses, both men and women consult her.

Strangely enough, the most intimate details of the life of a patient are discussed openly with the witch doctor, even in the presence of a member of the opposite sex. Unlike the *sukia*, the *curandera* will accept pay for her services.

787 In addition to her use of plants, the witch doctor sometimes employs some form of sorcery to impress her patients. A favorite method is to tie a thread, preferably a silk one, around the little stones called *sukia stones*, which are found in the ancient graves, and to hang them from the hand or from the ceiling of the house. The *curandera* reads the answers to the questions asked her by the patient from the manner in which the stones swing.

[a] See Pittier, 1891, p. 93.

[p. 26-A]

[P. 26(A)]

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Past	Present	Future
805 192 5 days past *skfLi*		5 days after today *skfiki*
6 days past *tkrik*		6 days after today *teriki*

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP of P. 26(B)--Qualys?]

LIFE CYCLE

784 [182] [756] [184] [609] All events of life are bound by tabus and fear, and of necessity these occasions require the aid of the medicine man. Even on the Pacific slope where custom is less rigid, certain prohibitions and laws continue, although they are not freely discussed nor is their practise admitted to strangers.

843 **Pre-natal.** Both Gabb [98] and Pittier [99] have called attention to the fact that the Bribri believe that an unborn child can be influenced by certain objects seen or objects worn by the woman around her waist. This is not limited to the Bribri, however, but is also characteristic of the Cabécar. In addition to the information given by the above-mentioned authors, there are many more superstitions, some of which are cited below. Pregnant women cannot participate when certain types of poison are used for fishing (*see* Fishing), [753] nor can they cut cacao trees. If they cut such a tree, when it is time for the child to die, he will wilt from the waist down in slow agony and will then require the aid of a medicine man to die (*see* Curing). A pregnant woman cannot eat from a pot, only from a leaf or a plate. If she fails to obey this rule, her child will be stupid or stricken dumb and not even the medicine man can cure him. If she eats [825] *perico ligero* (sloth) it means that her family will be valiant and hard to kill. If the man is an *okym* (*see* Death), he cannot bury while his wife is pregnant. There is also the belief [761] that the first time a girl is in this state someone has to die. Occasionally, therefore, the family of a dead person search for a girl in her first pregnancy and a fight with her family ensues. [184] This does not happen on the Pacific side.

[262] Tapir meat is tabu. Some months before birth, the medicine man gives the expectant

[TEXT CONTINUES middle of P. 26(B)--Qualys?]

[98] Gabb, 1875, p. 494.

846 remains in a corner for the next four days,
bathing regularly with the same kind of liquid.
756 The medicine man talks for two nights and
passes a variety of leaves, including *silk*
846 (*Aracea* sp.), over her and the new born babe
[824] who is also washed with leaves which sup-
[751] posedly have protective powers. These leaves
include: lemon grass (*Cymbopogan citratus*);
leaf of the *estrella* (*P. auritum* H.B.&K.); and
leaf of the *pasmo* (*Miconia impetiolaris*
D.Don.).[100] At the end of the eighth day,
[783] there is a purification ceremony during which
the medicine man blows smoke over the mother
and child. He then eats in front of the house-
hold so that all can see nothing is wrong and
then offers some of the same food to the
mother.

846 On the Pacific slope, the Cabécar only stay
isolated for three days and the cleansing cere-
mony is seldom performed.

846 The Bribri on both sides of the range have
much the same customs as the Caribbean Cabé-
756 car. After the fourth day of birth, however,
the medicine man appears and orders the
woman to bathe, giving her herbs for the
[783] purpose.[101] He blows smoke on her and the
child and puts a little water mixed with
chile, chocolate, and the heart of the *pejibaye*
palm in a leaf telling her to wash her hands
with it. Then he puts some of the same liquid
in his mouth and spits it back into the leaf,
repeating this four times.

853 The woman nurses the child until she be-
comes pregnant again, or at least from one
and a half to two years.

553 **Names.** Segarra y Julia [102] calls attention to
the practise of not naming a boy but allowing
him to choose his own appellation when he
reaches puberty. For the most part, the names
were taken from individuals who caught their
fancy even though not known personally, such
as a president, general, etc. These names were
frequently changed by whim. This custom is
still practised in upper Talamanca.

551 Pittier [103] notes that the Bribri male had a
[756] secret name. In 1956, however, with perhaps
the exception of upper Talamanca and Chir-

[100] This leaf is supposed to give a pale color to the infant.

[192] [101] This is called the *papuluak* ceremony. *pa* in this instance is "taboo" or "thing that is not touched." It

551 ripó, only the medicine man has a name which
[756] cannot be divulged. When there is no Christian term, parents call their children affectionately after colors or according to the kind of hair they might have. Other people designate them by their clan, e.g., son of *túgwa*, etc., which in Talamanca, at least, has all the significance of a family name. On the Pacific side, the non-baptized are called brother (*taže*) among the Bribri. *kutá*, meaning "sister," is not used for non-baptized people. All children receive a pet name at birth from their mother. One Bribri informant was called *kLeLe*, a term which he could not interpret apart from the fact that it was an endearing one. Animal names are also given and are used only by the immediate family. In public, Spanish names are heard. Cousin is used generally for both sexes as an affectionate term (for a more detailed list *see* Kinship Terminology).

881 **Puberty.** Girls start to menstruate between
[145] 12 and 14. On this first occasion a house of plantain or banana leaves is constructed apart from the dwelling and so arranged that light is not permitted to enter (*see* Tabus). The girl is fed only by her mother and follows a strict diet consisting almost entirely of fruits, with
[262] the exception of bananas, and no salt. Further-
[271] more, she cannot drink water other than that from a well or a place where the water is not flowing. When her period is over, she bathes in a spring that is almost dry. The medicine
[756] man gives her copal (*Protium Costarricense*
[824] [Rose] Engler) bark to chew and a drink made
[278] from plants and roots. This beverage prevents menstruation for two months. After that the
841 flow comes regularly. At no time when men-
[264] struating can the girl serve men at meals, and
[262] during this period she must stay aside even in her home, abstain from salt, and drink from a gourd apart from the rest.

854 **Education.** The overindulgence of babies is
[862] common and they are weaned anywhere from one and a half to two years of age. They are
[855] held continually in someone's arms, carried on the back, or swung in a hammock. In Talamanca and Chirripó, the customary manner of

846 also can mean "feces" and "bread." *pa* means "around
756 one." *kuak* is "to bathe."
192 [189] Segarra y Julia, 1907, pp. 552–53.
[190] Pittier, 1938, pp. 27–28.

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854 carrying a baby or small child is astride the
[855] hips held by a cotton cloth or *mastate* (*see* Bark Cloth) strip. One never sees a baby
[856] crawl and they are given anything they cry
863 for. It is interesting to note that habits in connection with excretion are taught practically from birth. The child is taken out of the house and held up while he does his needs. He is not allowed to do so on a lap nor in the dwelling itself.

593 The family is very close. It is not unusual
854 to see a mother put her arm around a son, or a father lie in a hammock with his small children beside him. Parents pay attention to personal details, such as wiping a child's nose or
264 washing its face. There are not, however, regular meal hours. One eats when there is food and when one is hungry. The Pacific
[177] Cabécar copy the rules of the school and eat three times a day in their own homes.

868 Almost as soon as they can walk, both sexes are taught to swim and help to make fires, using the fire fan and blowing. Girls are taught
[864] to pull their skirts between their legs when sitting on the low benches or on the ground before the hearth. At the age of seven, they begin to clean the house, cut fire wood, and cook. The boys cut wood, fish, and hunt, using small arrows for training. When the adults are out in the fields or hunting, children up to ten years old stay at home to tend the
867 fire and to work about the house. Parents also are responsible for teaching tribal customs, for example: the clans with which one can marry;
[788] tabus; the baptism of one's self with salt water when seeing the sea for the first time,[104] etc.

[877] In Talamanca and Chirripó, there is no school and all lore is learned by word of mouth on rainy nights around the hearth. "Study" is
[156] restricted to those preparing to be medicine men (*see* The Medicine Man), who must undergo a severe apprenticeship, or in a less
[167] lengthy manner to those who want to have some connection with the handling of the dead (*see* Death). Games are limited and simple.
857 Small children take pebbles or grass in their
[524] toes and try to place them in a straight line. Often they play with mud daubers' nests or similar objects connected with their environ-
[526] ment. Boys play at marksmanship with a bow,

[104] Pittier, 1938, p. 20.

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764 later. Here it is necessary to note, however,
[178] that certain vestiges of traditional customs persist, at least among the Bribri of Cabagra. When a person has been dead and buried a
[765] year, he is exhumed and replaced in the same grave.

767 **Official Participants in Death and Burial Rites.**
764 There is an elaborate group of officials connected with death and burial rites even today. Each division requires certain preparation by the individual taking part in the rites. In a sense, these participants can be classed as lay clergy. These "professionals," if so they can be called, are of utmost importance when one
[784] realizes that the dead are strictly tabu to the non-initiated. If, by any ill luck, a person
[783] should touch someone dead, a three-day purification ceremony is absolutely essential or misfortune will befall him. This is true of both slopes of the range.

[756] The principal figure in these rituals is the medicine man, known in Bribri and Cabécar as the *jawá* (*see* The Medicine Man). Next in importance today is the Burier (*see* The Buriers) who handles and wraps the dead. Then follow the Singers (*see* The Singers) whose place is now generally taken by the
[756] medicine man as well as that of the Preparer of Feasts. A medicine man, particularly on the Pacific side, functions in all of these positions. Among the Cabécar, there is a minor group known as the *já*, and among the Bribri the *ǯarichɔk*, who need no special training but who prepare the things for the dead to take with them *without* touching the body.

[756] The preparation and position of the medicine man is treated under religion because in addition to his curing abilities, he personifies the last remaining vestiges of former credences and priesthood.

The other officials in connection with death and burial have duties concerned solely with these operations. They do not seem to form part, as has been said by some, of the priesthood, but do have a decided social position
[554] because of their task.

767 **The Buriers.** They are known as *ókuh* or *ókɨpm* in Bribri and *kerí* in Cabécar. They are
[756] the only people, aside from the medicine man who is all important, who can touch the dead. They must also light the funeral fire. They are
[825] the only non-clergy who can touch a buzzard or a possum.

767 or a possum. There is a well-regulated course which one must adhere to before one can achieve this position. The fee for this is paid [965] to the teacher (who is, of course, a recognized Burier) in foodstuffs, such as pigs, *bavas* of yucas, etc. Plus the study, there are twenty- [262] two days of rigid diet when meat, salt, and chocolate cannot be used. After this, the aspirant must act as assistant five times, four of [785] which demand fasting, and for two days of which he cannot use his hands to eat nor to touch his face. The training of the novice begins at four o'clock in the morning when he must bathe with his teacher who is the only person he is allowed to see. He cannot touch another man or woman and must live during [343] this period in a hut of banana leaves which he himself must build. The teacher likewise is not allowed to touch others, and must hand the food to his pupil from afar. This in itself must be in *bijagua* leaves and cannot have contact 787 with the human hand. One of the tests is for 767 the novice to go with the teacher at three o'clock in the morning and cut a staff. Both put a string around one wrist and around each staff. Then the master sticks his pole in the ground and attaches the string to a nearby tree. The aspirant copies this act. If both cuttings grow, it is a sign that the novice will live long and bury many people. If one dies, it is taken for a bad omen. A full-fledged burier must 767 follow a diet the day of and after a funeral. [262] He can eat nothing but plantain (*Dominik*) and wild herbs cooked without salt.

[554] Even the younger generation on the Pacific slope respect the Buriers. The comment of an exceptionally enlightened Bribri, for example, when questioned about the necessity of the Burier at a death was: "This is the custom, as is a law, and one has to do it whether one likes it or not." In 1956, in Salitre alone, there were six Buriers. Ujarrás had three, but could use those from Salitre if their own were not available. At Ujarrás, however, all who assist at the funeral must bathe three days later at four o'clock in the morning. They must also tap the official Burier on the head with *bijagua* leaves.

767 **The Singers.** There are no longer Singers except in Chirripó. In the other regions, the 533 medicine man, as stated before, has taken over [756] their functions. The duties of the Singers were
[775]

767 always confined to funeral ceremonies where
533 they chanted the deeds and merits of the de-
[775] ceased as well as sped the soul along on its
journey to the other world through song. The
[614] Bribri Singers came from the *stsukur* or *stu'gur* clan according to Gabb and Pittier,[105] but the elders and medicine men in 1956 claimed that they belonged to the *síbəwak*, *korrebué*, or *sinəbwak* groups. Gabb states that their office
[428] was hereditary,[106] and that they were next to the *usegLa* in importance. Pittier suggests heredity [107] and notes that they lived only by the lower Coen and had a number of assistants the highest of whom were called *ko*, and apprentices known as *sini*.[108] He adds that elaborate preparation was necessary before the title of Singer was won. This is not exactly in keeping with the idea that their position was hereditary.

[614] Cabécar Singers had to come from the following clans: *kibegrəwák*, *síbəwak*, *bLerəwak*, and *sənitsəa* (*see* The Clans and Myths: *Protectors of Clans*). Their name in this language is *səgLə*.

[198] Gabb,[109] speaking only about the Bribri, calls attention to the fact that the songs of *stsukur* were in a language which neither he nor the uninitiated could understand. As Lehmann has pointed out, however, the Bribri Singers were in reality a Cabécar group,[110] according to his spelling and that of Pittier, the *korrbué*. We use *korrebué* because this is the pronunciation given by the Bribri today. There is, nevertheless, another angle to this problem, particularly if one accepts the statement that the Bribri Singers could come from one of the three clans mentioned above. This
[198] is the use of a "sacred language" by the
[177] medicine men of both Talamancan peoples when singing and the adoption of foreign songs even by the laymen. These aspects will be discussed later under Curing and Songs, respectively.

764 The Pacific Bribri and Cabécares, in lieu
• 756 of Singers, have a ceremony called *setéhrwək*
184 in Bribri which is carried out by the medicine man when someone dies (*see* First Burial).

[105] Gabb, 1875, p. 508; Pittier, 1938, p. 17.
[106] Gabb, 1875.
[107] Pittier, 1895, p. 18.
[108] Pittier, 1938, pp. 17–18. Could there be a connec-

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767 764 **The Organizer of Feasts.** This position is common to both Talamancan peoples and is covered by a single title, *bikä'kra*. One has to study to achieve it.[111] The principal tasks of the Organizer of Feasts is at the death of an individual to designate the persons who must [273] plant the maize to be used for the chicha at the time of the bone funeral; to name those who are to make it; and those who have to provide chocolate, plantains, pigs, etc., for the feast. On the Pacific slope, this position has [756] also been absorbed by the medicine man.

764 **The já.** Back in the woodland, however, where authorities and visitors are scarce, the method of handling the dead adheres to former [775] usage. Things must be prepared for the soul of the deceased. This is done by those known as the *já:* three adults if an adult died, or three girls, or three boys, such as the case may be. Cotton must be placed inside the body bundle of a woman. Combs and other ornaments are carried apart with the clothes of the dead. Even if a person has a lot of clothes, all are put in the grave. If a boy dies, a miniature bow and arrow are substituted for the cotton. But when the deceased is a man, in addition to this, they place a miniature blow gun, fish hook, and digging stick in the bundle. This [768] is done in order to leave the real ones for the family's use. A net carrying bag is also placed with the dead man.

[767] **First Burial.** When death takes over, the entire retinue of officials begin their work. Of course, customs vary depending upon the [656] geographical location. Government and eccle- [797] siastical authorities have prohibited the fundamental part of the ancient rites, that is, the keeping of the dead for a year before burial. Usually, the body is left in the house for about twenty-four hours by both the Bribri and Cabécar who are located near non-indigenous villages on the Caribbean side. The personal belongings of the deceased, either in effect or symbolically, and cacao paste are placed beside the corpse which is then wrapped in *mastate* (*see* Bark Cloth) and tied with a cotton string made especially for this purpose

[767] [533] tion between *sini* and *sinabwak?* (*See* Social Organization.)

[109] Gabb, 1875, p. 508.

[110] Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, p. 220.

[111] Pittier, 1936, p. 17.

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764 were placed at one end of the spot where the grave was to be dug in such a manner that when the wick burned out the candle lighted. At the other end, the cross was put up. When the hole was ready, the coffin was lowered and covered with dirt. Then everyone returned to their respective houses except the few people who had been near the woman at death or had accidentally touched anything near her after she died. In this case, there were only the Buriers, the apprentice, and one man.

[783] [756] These persons were considered unclean and had to be purified. The medicine man, who was also a Burier but had not assisted at the death, took over. First, he had them bathe in the river, and then, before entering the house, he put hot water in cups made of *bijagua* leaves and poured it over their hands and arms up to their elbows. Inside, chocolate, yuca, and [775] maize were left in gourds for the soul to eat when it returned in the night, and there it [769] stayed for nine days. A feast was prepared for the ninth day and the motions of saying the [777] rosary were carried out as no one really knew the entire prayer.

765 On the tenth day, the *seté hrwək* ceremony was observed. Fire was lighted with a stone and *cabuya* (*see* Fibers) wick. This was taken to the cemetery. Among the Talamancan Bribri there is a similar ritual, but the fire must be of cacao wood. Then four cacao beans, four grains of white maize, four *ayote* [825] (pumpkin) seeds, four roosters (because the dead was female, chickens are for the males), and four gourds of chicha were placed in the house for the departed soul. The number is [801] important as *sibu* (*see* Theological Beliefs) is supposed to have put four of everything in the [767] world. The task of the Singer was performed by the medicine man and the Buriers, four [539] in all. The history of the deceased was chanted: how she looked; what she did; how she played and planted; where she went on vacations or trips; what she bought and had; in truth, everything pertaining to her life. During this chant the medicine man and the Burier remained apart on two benches placed at the west. This ceremony began at 3:00 P.M. and ended at 11:00 P.M. with a feast of yuca, *tiquizque*, meat, chocolate, and chicha.

Funeral and Bone Burial. Attention has already been called to the custom of burying the bones

765 of an individual a year or more after death. The best description of such an event is pre-
114 sented by Gabb who assisted at the bone burial
765 of the last famous "King of Talamanca,"
[643] Santiago. This has the historic value of an eyewitness report of a ceremony which today is impossible to duplicate, and forms an essential contribution to the cultural background of these people.[113]

765 Only in upper Talamanca and upper Chir-
[184] ripó is this type of funeral still practised, and
[752] at that secretly, because it is prohibited by the Costa Rican authorities. The dwelling of
[756] the medicine man takes the place of the "casa grande" or big house which was used for the purpose of ceremonials in connection with such burials. Here the bones are taken from the leaf bundle and wrapped in *mastate* by the Burier. Then this is placed on a long bench
533 beside the doorway. The medicine man sings,
765 mentioning *sibu* and recounting the life of the deceased and all his actions, for example: how he planted, worked, what he did, and where he went. The song also gives the reason for his death. If the dead was female, the song
[535] recounts her doings. A feast follows and sometimes a dance.[114] To the beat of drums (*see*
765 Musical Instruments) and rattles, the people and the medicine man accompany the Buriers
[764] who carry the bone bundle to the graveyard. Generally, this is situated on a ridge or near the headwaters of a stream. Here are located the clan graves known as *pq*. These are deep, round holes lined with four planks of an ex-
[824] tremely hard wood (*Xanthoxylum* sp. called *surí* in Cabécar) which does not rot easily. The Bribri line the bottom with stones, but the Cabécar do not bother to do this. The Bribri are more particular than the Cabécar in that the bones should not in any way touch the earth. An additional plank is inclined over
[614] the top as further protection. Each clan has its own grave which is used until it is full.
[178] Today, however, clans that are allowed to inter-marry are buried in the same shaft. The Burier removes the planks of the grave and puts the bone package in with his hands while the medicine man sings, explaining that now the soul has gone and will never return. After-
[273] wards, he arranges the planks as before. Chicha

[113] Gabb, 1875, pp. 500-503.
[114] Pittier, 1938.

765 is often made and is drunk at the burial place
[279] during the ceremony. Pittier[115] records the
782 [Text continues TOP of P. 35(B)--Qual/YST]
825

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

614 **The Clans.** The Bribri and the Cabécares are
[616] divided into matrilineal clans which developed from moieties. Although a number of clans have disappeared through war and sickness, those which remain strictly follow the ancient
582 rules. This emphasizes the non-marriageable
614 position of all the mother's relatives. A vestige of cross-cousin marriage exists but is not compulsory. One can marry the mother's brother's child but never the offspring of the maternal aunt. On the father's side, beyond the father's sister and the first cousins, one can marry whom one wants. The importance of
614 clan relationship is easily understood when
673 one takes into consideration the moral code of these peoples. According to this there are three great sins which are placed in the following order:

1) To have sexual relations with own clan.
[825] 2) To allow an animal to suffer when wounded in-
224 stead of killing it rapidly.
[177] 3) To kill a man. (This may be the influence of the Roman Catholic Church and the government of Costa Rica.)

582 The need to adhere to clan regulations in
614 regard to marriage is illustrated by the formation of new clans as a result of marriage outside of the tribe proper. This has become more
[164] important because in the past 50 years many clans have died out due to measles and yellow fever epidemics, and the always present amoeba. In Salitre, for example, a new group has been formed which is known as *terú*. This started when a Bribri man belonging to the *uriwak* clan married a Térraba woman. The Cabécares are less inclined to form new divisions. Those who have inter-married with the
[166] Bribri do not remain in Cabécar territory (*see* list of Bribri clans).

614 On the Caribbean side, clans are associated
[423] with given geographical sections (*see* Villages; Land Tenure). The land is owned by the
[75] complete group and the medicine man in

[115] Pittier, 1938, p. 26.
[116] Gabb, 1875, pp. 507-509.

765 782 825 sacrificing of a military macaw (*Ara militaris*) over the grave.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

614 [423] [756] [423] [627] [692] [681] [184] [423] certain clans still controls and keeps ritual property. This consists of drums or gold pre-Columbian figures (*see* Myths: *Clan Protectors*). Formerly the *usegLa* administered justice within the clan. Now the medicine man sometimes assumes this role although the most usual method is for the family of the culprit to take matters into their own hands. In extreme cases such as a sexual offense within the clan or murder, poison is given or the offender is buried alive. On the Pacific slope, land tenure by individual clans disappears. Three or two groups, as the case may be, settle in a given section such as Cabagra or China Kichá, and own land as a single unit.

[484] 184 [422] 692 These people know, however, of their Talamancan counterparts and keep as a goal the idea of visiting, at least to know personally, the home site of their clan on the Caribbean watershed. Clan-owned ritual property does not appear on the Pacific. The family unit on this side has been known to administer justice, but this task is usually left to the Costa Rican civil authorities in the nearest center.

614 [114] 565 [793] [643] Gabb does not seem to have considered the clans, rather he makes a distinction in social classes,[116] indicating the Cabécar *usegLa*, or high priest, as the spiritual head of both Bribri and Cabécar, while the temporal ruler was Bribri. This lay head was known as the "King" and tradition holds that there were two clans of "Kings." These were not inter-marriageable. Only one clan of these remains today (*see* Non-Documental History of Talamanca). The

793 692 Indians recount that the most powerful individual was the *usegLa* who spoke both Bribri and Cabécar. It is said that complaints were passed from the "King" to him for decisive action. On such occasions, he retired to a secret and sacred cave which had much *pita* (*see* Fibers) at the entrance. There he had sacred jaguars known as "dogs" and snakes at his command. The last *usegLa* is supposed to [164] have died from smallpox during the first half of the 20th century. The clan of the *usegLa* 614 still exists, however, in the upper Coen, Tala-
177

438 money used for dealings with non-Indians.
[497] A favorite commodity for exchange, especially with the Cabécares, is the wild pig. Contrary to the ordinary domesticated hog, they are
[231] trained to follow like a dog, sleep under the hammocks or at a person's side, and fulfill the function of a pet with the children. These pigs are fattened for a given feast, for instance bone burial, or are interchanged for salt and woven mantas (fig. 10, *c*) with the Borucas. Other articles still traded by the Talamancans with the Borucas and Térrabas on the Pacific slope are net bags and hammocks, both specialties of the Bribri, mastate and wax from the wild bee.

436 **Economy.** Money is still not too important among these people. On the Caribbean side,
464 where contact with non-Indians is less constant
[177] than in the Pacific region, the oil drillers have attempted to employ Talamancan laborers on the road gang. Although willing enough workers, they are not permanent, returning to their homes after a week or two. In fact, the usual rate of inquiries for jobs is on the average of one a month. In contrast, from 100 to 150
439 Indians appear weekly on the oil company's road carrying food for sale at the camps.
[rest continues top of P. 41(B)—Quaist]

RELIGION, MAGIC, ETC.

● 756 **The Medicine Man.** To understand the nonmaterial culture of the Talamanca peoples it is of utmost importance to comprehend the function of the medicine man or *jawá* (fig. 11, *c–d*). He is the key to the cure of the body and in a lesser degree of the spirit of the Bribri and the Cabécar. In former times, he appears
[554] to have been below the *usegLa* in rank and power (*see* Social Organization). Today, how-
756 ever, his importance not only among the Cabé-
177 cares and the Bribri but also the Chiricanos and many non-Indian Costa Ricans cannot be understated. There are numerous cases of
[743] people leaving centers where hospital facilities are available, such as Golfito, Palmar Sur, Puerto Cortes, and San Isidro del General, to
[484] travel over rugged trails to Salitre to consult Indian medicine men in Ujarrás when the
[rest continues bottom of P. 41(B)—Quaist]

[495] [144] In 1959: ₡6.63 made a dollar.
[145] Usually 100 pounds.

6:Stone E-5 (1956-1959)1962
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439 The principal items are lemons, which bring
[435] ₡8.00[141] per 100; oranges at ₡10.00 per 100; alligator pears, from ₡0.20–0.25 each; and yuca at ₡10.00 per quintal.[142] The sums received are generally spent on cheap cotton cloth for dresses; shirts and trousers; combs for adorning the hair; iron cooking vessels; guns and gun powder; patented medicines, etc.

464 The people on the Pacific watershed work temporarily as day laborers in Potrero Grande and Buenos Aires. They earn on the average of
[465] ₡5.50 per day clearing pasture lands, felling trees, etc. The Bribri sell net bags to non-
439 Indians in the nearby settlements at a cost of
435 ₡2.00; hammocks at ₡15.00; agave rope (*see* Fibers) at ₡0.25 a coil, ₡0.50 a twist. Maize brings ₡2.00 a *cajuela*;[143] yuca ₡0.15 to ₡0.70 a pound; garlic and tobacco ₡1.50 a pound; *pejibayes* are ₡0.10 a pound; bananas ₡1.50 a stem. Coffee, the most important cash crop, is sold almost exclusively by the Cabécares and brings around ₡1.00 a pound. Rice is ₡40.00 a quintal. Chickens sell from ₡0.50 up to ₡3.50. Eggs bring from ₡0.25 to ₡0.30 apiece. The size of the animal determines the price of pigs and cattle. The highest for swine, however, is ₡100.00 and for a steer ₡250.00.

RELIGION, MAGIC, ETC.

● 756 famous ones cross to this side of the range, or
177 in Salitre where some make their home. The
484 Indians themselves often go to Talamanca from the Pacific side because the Chinese and other merchants in Buenos Aires ask too much for
756 patent remedies. It should be remembered that
757 behind the fanfare and the to-be-expected magical covering or hocus-pocus of the medicine man, lies astute common sense. Strict diets
[262] are generally part of the cure. These include the prohibition of salt, coffee, chocolate, chicha, and, more often than not, meat. The
756 position is not hereditary although a medicine man's son can become one and frequently does. Study and knowledge of forest lore are requisites, and any bright boy who wants to study and has enough money or produce to pay a teacher can, with time, become a medicine

[143] This, in Costa Rica, represents 32 pounds.

756 man. It is a question of attaching oneself to a recognized curer who is willing to teach and adhering to a strict training. Among the Cabécar, an aspirant must belong to one of the [614] following clans: túgwa, bʉeriwa, síbawa, sənʃtswa, ǰəǰəwa, múnúLiwa, kibegruwák.

The most respected medicine men are Cabécares and live in San José Cabécar which serves in a sense as the "university center." The combination of theology with medicine makes this important as the Cabécares have maintained the religious superiority of the Talamancans. In addition to curing, all lore must be part of a good professional's knowledge. He must know the songs and "histories" which tell of the creation, of ancient culture heroes, common folk tales, as well as sacred [198] songs with words in an ancient or secret [778] language unknown to the general public. These last are akin to prayers and are sung to the sacred stones (*see* Special Paraphernalia and Significance) to see if a patient will live or die. In reality, to be a good doctor means to combine the role of a counselor, a fixer, a priest, a prophet, and a curer of people.

Bribri medicine men on the whole lack the respect and, according to popular belief, the know-how that is accredited to the Cabécares. Therefore, it is not unusual to find Bribri [754] medicine men who take recourse to witchcraft and black magic. This is one of the reasons why the Borucas and Térrabas prefer a Cabécar medicine man.

Medicine men are paid only when they cure. The recompense from their own people is a pig, cow, or agricultural produce. Occasionally in Salitre and Cabagra, and often when the medicine man travels amongst the Boruca and [436] the Térraba, he is paid with money. Non-Indians always pay in cash.

756 778 776 **Special Paraphernalia and Significance.** Talamancan religion begins with the great God known as *sibu*. He is the creator of all things and is behind all happenings. One of the most important symbols of *sibu* is the staff of the medicine man. According to the Bribri and the

[144] Aguilar P., 1953.
[145] Skinner, 1920. The staff pictured here is the property of don Orón Jiménez Luthmer of San José.

756 Cabécares, its origin dates from before the
778 birth of the world. At that time, *sibu* owned
[770] a staff which in a certain sense was his monitor.
[172] It is interesting to note that wooden staffs which are obviously ceremonial have been found in caches associated with the Highland archæology on the slopes of Irazú volcano
[171] (fig. 12, *a*).[144] They are a South American trait and are still used by medicine men among the Chocó of Colombia and by tribes in the Amazon basin. In Talamanca itself, chief and medicine man staffs were carved as late as the 19th century (fig. 12, *b*).[145] In Spanish, the medicine man's staff used today (fig. 11, *c*) is known as the *palo de cacique*, its red wood popularly believed to be *cacique* wood. There is a mystical connection between the medicine man and his staff which is supposed
[787] to carry his curing power as well as contact benevolent spirits who help him cure. In Bribri it is called *biǰəbLəkərkeLi*. This literally translated means: *biǰəbLə*, a term applied to the songs of the medicine man in the night; *kər* = for; *keLi* = staff. Only the medicine men know where to find this firm wood.[146]

756 There is still another wooden object used for curing when the patient is in the last stages
755 of an illness and nothing else will work. This
[778] is a balsa log on which the medicine man carves with a knife, or makes rude drawings of, certain spirits called *miku* or *mikuǰeké* (*see* Theological Beliefs): a crocodile, snakes, a monkey, a bird, and a skeleton in chains. The subjects seem to depend upon the sickness. Some are the medicine man's spirit helpers while some
[776] are malignant spirits who are thought to have
[753] caused the disease. This log is placed beside the ill person whose hand is held by the curer or the patient has to sit on it. A chant forms part of this ceremony.

756 Stones are another very special part of the
778 equipment, the origin of which is also bound up in religious theology (*see* Sacred Songs). A medicine man may have any number of stones but there are two principal ones with a covering name which is sometimes mistaken by laymen as a third stone. This collective

[144] It resembles the one described by Gabb, 1875, p. 520.
[145] Staffs vary in length from three to six feet.

term is *sią* or *sienkúswa*. Individually, they are called *kúswa* or *dikúswa; sorkúswa* or *sorkúswa*. They resemble small river stones and are sometimes found in pre-Columbian graves. Today, the stones are "given" or "appear" to the medicine man on special occasions, or are handed down as a sacred heirloom by a colleague who must also belong to the same clan. When a medicine man dies, if he does not wish to give his own stones to a young professional, his brother or clan keeps them until a new doctor has need of them.

Curing (*see* Curing) is impossible without these two stones although other ones are also used. Some are taken from the belly of a wild pig, tapir, deer, etc. These, besides being employed for curing, are used to call the particular animal when one hunts and it is for this reason the Indians say that medicine men never lack game.

Leaves with white spots, called *aik* (*Aracea* sp.) in Bribri, also are part of the curing paraphernalia. The sap is caustic and the leaf is used more as an indication of magic power than for any other reason.

Tobacco for smoking is essential during childbirth. Other articles which compose a medicine man's equipment and which were left by *sibu* to be utilized while curing include the shell or body of a small land turtle, *kué;* a lizard, *trook;* the eyeteeth of jaguars; the feathers of certain water fowl, macaws, quetzals, hawks, and other birds; animal skins; and shells of which three are of particular importance. These are *tsumanik* and *tsrikuo*, a rose and white clam shell; and *duk*, a conch shell.

Training and Procedure. Although there is no fixed time required for preparing to become a medicine man, it usually takes from two to six years, depending upon the capacity of the novice's memory. The first six months are intensive. The apprentice goes for three days without eating. He makes a lean-to in the woodland out of all the herbs he can gather, edible and non-edible, and stays there for two days so as not to see the sun. At night he can go outside. During this period, the medicine man appears and teaches the ritual songs. After two days and two nights the teacher and his pupil eat all the edible leaves or herbs of the hut.

The next task for the novice is to obtain

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• 756 a staff of *cacique* wood either by finding one in the forest, by purchasing one from a medicine man, or by receiving one as a gift. This [787] is extremely important because without a staff [776] contact with the spirit, *duLør*, the messenger of *sibu*, cannot be made. Only full-fledged medicine men can talk to *duLør*, but the aspirant must see him alone in the forest with his staff. All claim that this is the worst experience during training as one must be absolutely isolated in the dark in deep forest land. Bit [787] by bit one can feel *duLør* approach. It is then that the novice receives a spirit, taken from someone long dead, to protect him.

The final or initiation ceremony takes place both inside and outside the house of the teacher, and is in truth a trial of endurance. The writer had a chance to witness such an event. The affair began at night and there were five medicine men taking part. A small room of palmito leaves had been built in a corner of the main house by and for the aspirant. This kind of leaf is not essential as banana or plantain can be used. There were two rows of leaves divided by a horizontally placed stick tied at the corners.

In the main room, the chief medicine man, singing and holding his staff, handed, one at a time, the feathers of the macaw, oriole, eagle, [825] quetzal, blue bird (Blue Tanager: *Thraupis Episcopus Diaconus* Lessom), hawk, paraquet, and parrot to the novice who also had his own staff. The young man took the feathers and tied them with a homemade cotton thread to a piece of rolled cloth. All the medicine men held staffs, and during the tying process, one sang to the aspirant while the rest sang to the witnesses who had to answer the song by saying "*ékékë*" (good).

When this was finished, the medicine men sat with their staffs over their shoulders on a [352] low, long bench called by the special name of *sąkure*, because on top of it the stones were later placed. The chief sang to one assistant over a small basket, called *sąbko*, which held the stones. These were wrapped in cotton inside two little *mochillas* or carrying bags. He took them out and gave the basket to the novice who promptly put the feathers in it. The singing continued, interspersed with joking between the medicine men.

[352] On a low, four-legged stool or bench the

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head man placed five folded carrying bags, one with a stone inside belonging to the novice; a paper package; two stones; and the basket with the feathers. These stones were not part of the *sịą́* and were handed to the chief medicine man by his wife. As each object was put on the bench, every medicine man and the aspirant had to put a hand on it. The principal medicine man took the basket and put it first on the stool and then on the earthen floor of the house and announced that it was time to rest. All got up.

At this point, the first wife of the head man handed him a gourd lined with banana leaves and filled with hot chocolate (unsweetened). He took it and all left the main house, singing, and went to a smaller one where there was a kitchen. There they said to two women who were cooking by the fire, "*ịękeʒicbərką*" (here many people do not fit), and "*sịą́ tsurú ibaų sịą́*" (*sịą́* chocolate heat for *sịą́*).

Then they took a pile of *bijagua* (*Calathea insignis* Petersen) leaves from a *tabanco* and brought it to the first house saying, "*ʒəbi* (this stands for *sịą́*) *dibaLa* (chocolate hot; if *ʒəbi* were not before this word, it would mean water hot, but the name for the stones changes the meaning) *meką* (put)." This is a phrase used ceremoniously. Freely translated it signifies, "They are going to heat chocolate for *ʒəbi*."

The witnesses answered, "*ékékẽ*" (good).

The medicine men brought in the chocolate in an iron pot and placed it on the floor beside the bench with the stones, another bunch of leaves, and leaf-wrapped packages of white maize chicha. The *bijaguas* were to be used as cups for the chocolate. They said to those present, "Wait. We are going to serve the feast." All replied, "Good."

They brought in more leaves and a child came with water in a gourd. This was immediately taken by a medicine man and was placed on leaves on the floor beside the bench.

The first wife of the head medicine man and another woman sat on a long bench. They were to serve the feast. All women who participate in this ceremony must be old or at least middle-aged. The men sat opposite on another long bench and the chief one began to chant, "*milkadioʒək*" (let's drink this). Each medicine man, always holding his staff and

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● 756 sitting on the bench, repeated this chant and as he did so, the principal one passed him chocolate in a leaf cup. More women joined the others on the women's bench facing the men. One woman then commenced to serve the drinks from the pot while a man stood and passed cups, holding his staff all the time. He started to sit down but all yelled at him and he jumped up as if he realized what was wrong. He then changed each cup from the left hand of one person to the right hand of the next person as they sat on the bench. In this way, each person received his neighbor's cup. It was important that this be done because the ceremony referred to *sibu*, and, therefore, the cup must be held in the right hand. Now all drank the chocolate and some even emptied part into the cups of those who drank faster.

As the standing man drank, the novice rose and offered him a drink, then he did the same to each man, the first wife continuing to pour the chocolate. While this was going on the head man sang.

Next chicha was passed in fresh cups of leaves in the same manner as the chocolate. This time the head man took a sip and divided the rest in his cup among the other men. The standing medicine man poured some of his into the women's cups. The novice repeated with chicha the same rite he had performed with the chocolate.

At this stage, the head man emptied all the carrying bags on the bench. Some had little ones inside and all had stones wrapped in cotton. There were as many as thirty stones including an opal. The head medicine man sang over them and exchanged some with the aspirant. There was one large marble over which the head man sang and then touched his own foot, knee and other parts of his body, telling the novice that he must sing to each part when one is sick as well as to the important stones and to the spirit who must talk to *sibu*.

A discussion over the merits of certain stones and an exchange took place among the medicine men, each one piling up his own heap. After the argument, every owner sang over his own stones. Meanwhile, the chief man sang over each stone in the center of the bench and as he touched one he sang to the novice. All the medicine men had to do likewise, facing

● 756 the largest stone on the bench. Most of the songs referred to certain birds in the woodland. As the aspirant cannot touch the stones until they have been put into his hands, each medicine man took the stones from the center and placed them in the hands of the novice.

[354] It was quite dark, so the first wife made a candle from beeswax, rolling it long, and tore a strip of cloth to wrap around it. When finished, it appeared very much like a licorice whip. She put this candle on the side of the bench so that it lit up everything on it.

The aspirant had had to fast all day within his room. Now two ears of white maize and one raw palmito (which is white) was put inside the room for later use.

At 2:45 A.M. the same ceremony with first chocolate and then chicha was held. This must be done four times during the night. The [801] number four is bound up with all semireligious acts as it is intimately connected with certain histories of *sibu* (*see* Legends). The head man put two pieces of cotton on top of a carrying bag. Then all went to the kitchen house and brought back a white chicken and a white rooster saying, "We are going to serve the feast" to each person. The witnesses answered, "Good." An iron pot containing bananas and palmito was brought in and the same statements were repeated. The first wife took another bundle of leaves from the *tabanco* and the women served rice and chicken in them. Again there followed the ceremony of the cup being changed from left to right.

At 4:00 A.M., two medicine men, including the chief one, went to the kitchen house with the novice, taking some *silk* leaves. They were followed by the first wife carrying a sick child. This was one of the important steps in the initiation because it showed the aspirant how to go about curing an ill person. The head medicine man took the novice by the hand and together they drew the leaves over the fire so as to soften but not burn them. They fanned the child with the leaves. During this process there was not a whimper from the patient. This was done four times and then the novice repeated it four times alone. The chief man stayed beside the pupil, however, and warned him not to burn the leaves. When [787] they crackled and popped as they were being drawn over the fire, it was considered a good

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● 756 sign and that the novice would turn out to
[787] be a good curer.

After the fanning, the group returned to the main house and once more partook of the chocolate, food, and chicha. This time the aspirant took the place of the medicine man who passed the cups and was coached by the chief man.

The head man took a piece of cotton and picked up the pebblelike stones of the aspirant and sung over them. He wrapped them in cotton and put them in a small carrying bag with the largest of the stones on top. He placed this carrying bag in a bigger one and tied it up for the novice. He took another bag and lectured over it to one of the medicine men and then put it around his own neck. The other *jawá* picked up his stones and put them in the two carrying bags from whence they had come, while the chief man did the same with the stones of the others. Finally, he hung the bag belonging to the aspirant around the latter's neck.

A medicine man, acting as assistant, brought
[824] the head man five leaves of *poró-poró* (*Cochlospermum vitifolium* [Willd.] Spreng.) who shaped one of them into a cup and put it on the small bench. He put a pinch of Honduras bark, *cáscara amarga* (*Sweetia panamensis* Bénth.), on each of the other leaves piling them on top of one another. The rest of the medicine he tied up in a leaf and gave to the aspirant who put it in a carrying bag hanging on the wall. Both then moved to the entrance of the house and the novice went outside. The chief man poured water from a small special gourd into the *poró-poró* cup and the novice had to mix the bark from one of the leaves in it and wash out his mouth. This had to be repeated until the contents of each leaf was used. The medicine left in the carrying bag was to be used in the same way after four days, with the chief medicine man present. On that occasion, the new doctor must talk to the stones also.

When the mouth washing was over, the head man took the carrying bag of the novice from the wall and put it over the latter's shoulder so that it hung down his right side. He proceeded to give the young man two
[852] new low benches made of white balsa wood and a white blanket which he wrapped around

756 him. Both benches had four feet, but one had
[352] a protruding tail and head with a red spot.
[532] The two men then went outside and the chief doctor closed the door to keep others away. From within, one could hear the elder man's voice in a song which gradually became louder and louder.

According to custom, they sat on benches in front of the house and the head man sang to the novice. Two of the assistant medicine men went out to watch for the sunrise so that they could warn the chief that it was time to put the novice back in the hut.

When they came in, the aspirant took off his white blanket. The head medicine man took the feathers from the first carrying bag which was still on the low bench, some stones, a staff,
[534] a jaguar skin, a long reed flute (*kuLu*) which only the medicine men can make and put these things in the leaf room. The two new benches were not included. Then the head man entered with the aspirant to arrange the details. When he came out, he said to the novice who remained inside, "You do not have permission to sleep, not even a little."

The aspirant had to stay in the room all the following day without sleeping because to be a doctor he must show his power of self control. In fact, this endurance test was explained by a simple question: if a medicine man were to have a very sick patient and fell asleep, what would happen?

The drinks and food were now passed for the fourth time with the same ceremony as
[534] before. Then the head man blew a conch-shell horn right by the novice's wall and pushed the leaves. This was to be certain that he was not dozing. The aspirant was forbidden to talk, but he answered by blowing at times a conch-shell horn and at others a flute. Every now and then the other medicine men would poke their staffs at the wall and receive a blown attestation of his wakefulness or a knock. This continued throughout the day.

At night the ordeal ended and the novice could leave his leaf compartment and take his stones. However, he had to wait four days before he could finish the mouth-washing ceremony and become in truth a *jawá*.

758 **Sickness.** On the Caribbean side, but less often on the Pacific, a lean-to for a sick person is made of *pejibaye* leaves at one end of the

6;Stone E-5 (1956-1959)1962
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[P. 51(A)] Cabecar Bribri

538 773 The "histories" or legends of the Cabécares and Bribri are numerous. By reviewing them we can gather some of their fundamental theology in spite of the influence of Christian missionaries and contacts with non-indigenous cultures. The Indians themselves refer to these stories as histories and do not like the word tale or legend. To them, they are still something sacred and apart and on the whole are known only to the *jawá* or older men. They are recounted to aspirants, and occasionally around the fire during nights of interminable winter rain. It is interesting that histories dealing with subjects such as the soul, the creation of the world, etc., are usually Cabécar by origin although accepted by the Bribri. Secular tales recounting the reason for the appearance or the voice of certain animals are generally Bribri.

776 **Theological Beliefs.** At the root of Talamanca religion, there is one powerful god, *sibu*, who, as Lehmann notes, has at least twenty different names.[160] He is good and is responsible for the good in the world. He is everywhere. When he is with non-Indians he dresses with shoes, etc., but with Indians he does as they do. He speaks all languages and taught people how to do everything.

[773] The role of *sibu* is akin to that of an artist or architect. He thought of man and he made us through *suLá* while he, *sibu*, was thinking 775 of them. The good and bad people all go to *sibu* when they die if their bones have been sung to (*see* Bone Burial). The soul must wait for this, and if they are never sung to, then a snake eats the bones. The souls of Indians and non-Christians go to the world below, nevertheless. This is why *sibu* took everything 772 from beneath the earth to make place for the 776 Indians there. In this underground domain, 753 there are four worlds. One is for sickness; one for the owners (*dueño*) or protectors of animals; one for Indians; one for the evil spirits. Disease is often sent by the spirit owners or protectors of animals or the animals themselves. This is one reason why the medicine [756] man has his own and secret name for them.

771 The Talamanca religion on the whole, how-
776

[160] Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, p. 220.

776 stole his child while Thunder was away in the forest. The bereaved father was furious and called *miguchké*, making a tremendous noise. Thunder fought and killed *miguchké*.

Minor evildoers are the *tǫmí* who are both men and women and can be treated collectively or individually. The *tǫmí* inhabit a mountain called *tabatá* near Cabagra on the Pacific side. At times, one can see their clothes drying in the distance, but upon reaching the spot, there are only four large upright stones. The *tǫmí* [825] take care of all animals. The tapir are their cows and the wild pigs and boars their swine. Reports about them come from hunters who have lost their way tracing game. The *tǫmí* do not like men.

Another bad spirit is *orusula*, an enormous pig whose head *sibu* cut off and kept his blood to teach men to beware of him. He lives in the mud of swamps and lagoons and his foam gives [753] people a rash which kills them.

775 There are some important malevolent spirits common to both groups known as the *wimbLu* [774] who are souls of the dead. There is more than one soul per person. One goes to *suLa;* one stays with the bones; and another appears to be the soul that torments the living. If the deceased liked to sing or whistle, his spirit has to do the same and it returns to make itself known to the person who cared most for him in life. It appears on the trail, in the cemetery, [787] makes a noise, and pesters its victim in dreams. [756] A medicine man is needed to rid one of the *wimbLu* (*see* Curing). If he doesn't do this, [753] the person dies.

776 There are also spirit lords of places and fish. None of these are particularly friendly to man.

mikubru lives on Pico Blanco where no one can reach him. His one good deed is to warn when sickness is coming by producing great flames on the summit.

The *ujum* are people who live in the rocks on barren peaks. The Bribri consider them as part of the original population of the earth before man and believe that they are evildoers.

suLášibí today is the name given to a section of land on the Alta Lari near Lagarto or *toLók*. The Bribri believe that before the birth of the sun, *suLášibí* was a person. He was lord of the

[192] [161] *di* is "water" and *bak* is "stone" in both languages. Jaguar is *ki* in Bribri and *namį* in Cabécar.
[162] *See* Linguistic Texts: *sibu* (sibu) *tsikineL* (born).

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Cabecar

*539 *sibu* lent him his staff for the trip, but Thunder would not accept it and said to Sea, "You brought this for me but don't leave it alone. Take care of it."

In the middle of the trip, Sea said to herself, "I don't understand why I can't leave this club alone. I shall try it and see what happens."

When she returned, the staff had disappeared. She looked everywhere but couldn't find it. While she was searching, a snake bit her and she died.

sibu arranged her in a burial package (*see* Death), but she began to swell. He put a frog on top to hold the package down. The frog grew hungry and jumped to catch an insect he saw passing. Sea popped into the air and became a tree. Her beautiful hair was changed into leaves and in them the parrot, the macaw, and all the birds made their nests.

The tree pushed and pushed upward piercing the sky which was *sibu*'s house. He became furious and said, "Listen! what a racket that tree makes forcing its way upward. It won't be long before it will break the air."

So *sibu* sent two birds, *Tijereta* and *Pajarillo de Agua*,[173] to grab the top of the tree and to make a large circle in space. When the two ends met, the tree fell and was converted into water. The nests of the parrot and the macaw were changed into turtles. The leaves became crabs. But the Cabécares know that the noise heard on the shore is the noise made by the wind when it blew through the leaves which were made from the hair of the beautiful woman, the Sea.

Lightning

(*Cabécar*)

*539 821 776 The master or owner of lightning is *labú*. He uses it as a weapon to light up around him. Because of this the word for lightning is the same as to light up: *kapwuphan*.

The Rain

(*Cabécar*)

● [756] The father and mother of rain are *karụibiké-*

[825]

[173] Fly-catcher (*Tyrannidae* Fam.) or the frigate bird (*Fregatidae* Fam.), and the grebe (*Colybidea* Fam.).

[174] *See* Linguistic Texts: *Pkba*.

*539 821 776 ●756 [241] *gra* and *karpimina*. The medicine man has to talk to them and to *serike* when he wants to make rain or to stop the rain. September is planting time in Talamanca, and that is when the sun is needed so as the cuttings or seeds will not be washed away. It is then that the *jawá* chants:

Let the sun come clean.
Let him raise above the sea.
Send to the north, the south, the east, the west,
Put on his clothes.
Come!
When he puts on good clothes,
The sun looks good;
But when he has on dirty ones
He's not so nice.

To bring rain, the *jawá* chants:

karpibikégra, karpimina
Come here,
Come rain soon,
To fall here.

(4) The Rainbow [174]

(Bribri and Cabécar)

When *bukubLute*, the bad spirit (*see* Tabus), smokes his pipe, he lights it with the rainbow. The smoke that comes forth is the north wind.

(5) The Origin of the Cabécares [175]

(Cabécar)

*589 [753] *sibu* kept us in the form of seeds in a *jaba* (basket; *see* Manufactures). The chief of the worms, a greedy fellow, passed and saw us there. He swallowed us. For this reason we have worms.

When *sibu* realized what had happened, he began to think about the kind of medicine to give this creature so that he would vomit up the *jaba* with the seeds. He decided on a mixture of drink knowing that the fellow was so greedy he would not refuse.

There was a little cacao tree and a gourd tree (*Crescentia Cujete* L.) which never bore. *sibu* met the chief of the worms near these

[175] *See* Linguistic Texts: *sejé tsinkineL* = we are born. For version of the Bribri origin myth *see* Pittier, 1903, pp. 2–4; Stone, 1956, p. 193. This last includes another Cabécar account.

*539 776 821 823 [825] *amus*), friends of *sibu*, warn man. This is when the rivers rise. *sibu* then sends *serike* to hunt for the bad spirit and see if he can save human lives. At times, one of *serike's* helpers is the lightning bolt. He also frightens people who try to harm the Indians. This is why when a storm is brewing, first the water birds appear; next the wind blows; and finally the rivers rise and the current roars.

*539 776 821 [825] *serike* chases the water-jaguar from one river to another, over mountains and around rocks. *sibu* gave *serike* a staff to help him in his quest. If this staff is placed on a mountain, immediately a chasm forms causing *dínamą* to move on. The cormorant and kingfisher also tell *serike* where they've seen *dínamą*. This is why there are always a few of these birds on the rocks in the rivers.

Whenever *serike* catches a water-jaguar, he takes him to where the sun rises. There he has a large pot into which he puts *dínamą* and cooks and eats him.

serike is also the hurricane and master of the winds. His mother was killed by the devil who lives above the Coen River on the other side of the range. When *serike* thinks about his mother's death, he becomes furious and blows up the river on his way to fight the devil. Unfortunately, he blows at everything in his path because he wants to fight. Then it is that one [756] [789] of the friends of *serike*, today the *jəwá* (medicine man) but formerly the *usegLa* also, must sing the following song to convince him to stop blowing:

It is not with me
This tree is my fruit
This house is mine
The trees are mine
Go on to fight with others,
This is mine.

[756] [761] Also when there is something making people afraid, or the water-jaguar causes people to drown in a deep pool, the *jəwá* talks to *serike* saying, "Uncle *serike*, here is fear. Come and destroy it."

The next day, *serike* blows and chases away fear. He has been known to destroy a bad pool in one or two years so that *dínamą* (*bák namą*) couldn't drown the people.

778 on the savanna but scattered rocks. One large
103 rock, however, has an imprint or imperfection
[133] caused by nature which with the help of the imagination one might call a jaguar's paw. From this comes the name *Mano del Tigre*. The Cabécar Indians as well as the Bribri, both Talamancan tribes, hold this rock sacred, and
[782] yearly the medicine men of these two groups
[756] leave offerings of food beside it. The respect for this spot must be very ancient as the following legend suggests.

* 539 A long time ago when the sun had not yet appeared, all the stones were as soft as mud. It was then that *ɨəwík*,[192] the monkeys, and the wild pigs lived together and decided to make an excursion with the object of picking out a place to live before the sun might appear. A jaguar also joined the group.

Thus it was that they left Talamanca and crossed the mountain range to the Pacific. *ɨəwík*, who was of normal height, died on the way.[193]

The jaguar, when he saw dawn coming, left his paw print on a rock. This is the reason for the boulder with a paw mark in the savanna by Térraba known as *Mano del Tigre*.

Some people, who lived near, saw many monkeys approaching and pursued them. When they reached them, however, they discovered that they had changed from monkeys to people. They had become the Térrabas. So the hunters left them alone and pursued the wild pigs until they arrived at a place called Boruca. Here they found that the wild pigs were people. This is how Térraba and Boruca were populated. The jaguar hid himself in the Cordillera Bruqueña where he is today.

(14) The Jaguar Hunt[194]

In former times our Indian race (tribe) did not fear anything. They went on hunts which lasted for many days. During one of these ventures, some of our people came across a large house (*palenque*) full of inhabitants. The hunters were caught and were not allowed to leave.

[192] A mythical man.

[778] [193] A great pile of stones in Ujarrás is supposed to mark his grave.

[194] *See* Linguistic Texts: *kɬɜLɨ namɨ* (hunt jaguar).

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*539 At night, they were given a large jug for a bed.

One of the prisoners noticed that the head of the house would go out to hunt but as soon as he left, the roar of a jaguar was heard. He spied on the man and discovered that outside of the house he was a jaguar but, by shaking himself, his hide fell off and he became a man who went into the forest.

The watching prisoner crept up to the jaguar skin and carried it off. When the man returned and did not find his jaguar skin, he became furious and began to eat the people.

One old woman, seeing the awful things that were happening, heated an earthen rod and stuck it in the mouth of the man-jaguar while he slept. Then she quickly hid in a little tunnel she had prepared beforehand. This is how the people in Alta Talamanca were rid of such a terrible scourge.

The Medicine Man's Stones

(Cabécar and Bribri)

*539 When *sibu* made the first eight medicine men, he died for four days. Three of these men
● 756 predicted that he would not stay dead but
778 would go to the sky. One of these was *díkúswa* who was once a water bird and when he said that *sibu* would never die he was made into the most powerful of the *sią́* or medicine man's three principal stones. All medicine men know
[763] when they themselves are going to die as *díkúswa* disappears or divides himself in half. He is so powerful that only the most powerful doctors dare to use *díkúswa*. The majority rely on *sorkuswa*. All the *sią́*, however, communi-
[198] cate with *sibu* and the medicine men in a "sacred" or private language unknown to the layman.

(15) The Sacred Stones[195]

(Cabécar and Bribri)

There is a spot in Talamanca where there are large boulders. Here live the *sią́*, the medicine men's stones. A new medicine man, if it is possible, goes there and leaves grains of white maize on the rocks at night. The next morning the stones appear.

[195] *See* Linguistic Texts: *sią́*.

Sickness

(*Cabécar*)

*539 753 [776] *Laraya* is the house of sickness and it is located under the spot where the sun rises. The lords or owners of sickness are known as the *aragopa* or *roaragopa*. They were the first people in the world, but *sibu* told them they would have to go below where the sun comes from as the people he would make would be sick if they stayed.

[756] [755] This is why the medicine men take a staff and say to sickness, "You have no right to be here as *sibu* gave you a place to stay. Go to your place." If the medicine man talks enough, sickness leaves as he realizes that *sibu* can send him away and he does not like this.

Clan Protectors

(*Cabécar*)

*539 614 [825] All protectors of clans come from where the sun rises. Formerly, each group and person in it had a figure of bone or stone or gold symbolizing this. The *usegLa* are protected by the jaguar and the crab. It was the crab who found water for them. He went to a dry place and dug halfway down. Water came up behind him.

The *tigibí* clan are a branch of the *usegLa* and have the same protectors. This group started when there were only men in the world. One day two men went to work and on their return found food prepared. They ate and liked it. This continued for thirty days. Then when they arrived home, they discovered twin girls. The men asked if they had fixed the food, and when the twins admitted that they were the ones, the men decided to live with them.

[776] The *sirakwa* are people who live under the earth. They protect the *túgwa*. For this reason, the *túgwa's* symbol is the figure of a person.

[824] The *guacal* or gourd tree has four branches and protects four groups. The first branch is symbolic of the *sibawak* clan to whom most of the Cabécar Singers belonged. This is why they used a gourd full of seeds to accompany their songs. The second branch of the tree belongs to the *bLeriwa*, the third to the *kibe-*

535 dance which was performed in a circle by men
224 and women with one person singing but the
533 whole group joining in the chorus. The song recounted the experiences during a hunt.

535 There are various dances held in connection
[764] with death and burial but they are seldom seen
184 today outside of upper Talamanca.

Pittier[208] mentions a bone dance performed
[765] at the time of secondary burial by men if the deceased was an adult and by women if a child. The bone dance witnessed by the writer was carried out by a line of women and one of men. The person taking the place of the
[533] Singer (*see* Death) chanted the life history of the departed, and kept time with a gourd rattle. His four assistants in the line of men had drums under their arms which they beat as they danced.

[756] A different bone dance which is a remnant
[727] of a war dance with trophy heads is occasionally performed when the medicine man is feeling particularly sure of himself and wants to celebrate. Men and women form a circle with interlocked arms. It is said that skulls were
[178] once balanced on the arms. Today, nothing is placed there. The men sing and the women join in the chorus singing *ékéké* meaning "good" or "well."

533 **Songs.** All sacred songs are basically Cabécar even though they may be sung in Bribri. The Medicine Man and sometimes the Burier
[198] sing these songs which are usually in ancient Cabécar and are not understood by the masses.

Lay songs are common to the Bribri and very rare among the Cabécar. The Bribri delight in inventing songs to fit the occasion. Both men and women like to sing and do so on the slightest provocation when working, bathing, washing, or minding the baby. The addition of words only for their sound is
[197] characteristic. Likewise, many Térraba words are found in Bribri songs, the meaning of which is unknown to the singer. In fact, the
[195] sung language permits all sorts of liberties as well as having a certain vocabulary of its own.

[773] western Panama. The traditional home of the Bribri
173 is in northwest Panama. *See* Stone, 1952, p. 252.

[207] Segarra y Julia, 1907, pp. 594–95.

[208] Pittier, 1938, pp. 25–26.

*539
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Sacred Songs

(18) Singer's Song[209]

(Bribri)

Now we're going to bring the spirit (*itsǿ*) from where we hid him and when we arrive with him in the house, we'll sing.

(19) *dikúswa*[210]

(Bribri)

[755
787] This is a song used by medicine men to fight sickness. It is sung over the sacred stones and in particular over *dikúswa*, to see if the patient will live or die. The meaning of the song is as follows:

In the beginning, *dikúswa* was a bird and *sibu* sent for him when he felt ill and asked whether he would live or die. *dikúswa* answered that *sibu* was only pretending because he would never die. *sibu* was so pleased with the reply that he left us *dikúswa* as a stone for the medicine men to use when curing.

Lay Songs

(20) The Monkey Dance[211]

(Bribri)

[535] This song receives its name from the fact that men and women dance it in a line and interlock their arms monkey fashion. The words have nothing to do with the monkey and are a mixture of ancient Térraba, Cabécar, and Bribri.

Freely translated the theme runs:
Water turtle, bad pool,
Someone passed me, dance, dance, dance.
There is the turtle; the turtle's pool;
The devil's pool; bad pool;
Someone passed me; shell pool;
Devil pool, dance; *kúsua* dance;
Beautiful horizon, valiant child.
Dance, dance, dance.

[756] [209] *See* Linguistic Texts: *biɜabLə-kək-keLi*. This is today the Medicine Man's song to his staff and takes its name from that of the staff.

[210] *See* Linguistic Texts: Sacred Songs: *dikúswa*.

[211] *See* Linguistic Texts: *buLɪakuLe*.

[212] *See* Linguistic Texts: *duLeɪɜ; also* The Arts.

LINGUISTIC TEXTS

534 2. "Oh Uncle," he asked, "Give me [something] to smoke." Tobacco came, tobacco for production for earth.

17. The Cuyeo (*Bribri*)

1. To cure for the first [time], then *sibu* became sick. Then *sibu* ordered the cuyeo called to cure him. Then *sibu* ordered the cuyeo to sing for the first [time].

2. The cuyeo went first to cure. Then he went to sing. Alone, he did not know if he would die. In the morning [of the following day *sibu*] asked him, "Will I die?"

3. The cuyeo answered, "Yes, you will die." Because of this *sibu* pressed the mouth of the cuyeo for lying.

Sacred Songs

18. The Staff of the Thinkers[291] (*Bribri*)

1. Now we are going [to hear it] sing.
We are going to bring *itsö* [from] where we went to hide him, to bring him again.

2. [When] we arrive again inside the house, then we are going to sing with *itsö*.

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2. "anaq́," iməbɨ̃kaLa,[292] "mų-suɛ̃ɔ." duq́-bitɛ́, duq́-uąLowa[293] iriria.[294]

17. Ĩipo

1. ɛ́ tsą́ kųLɛ́isúk,[295] etą sibu kirínawą. étą sibutə ĩipo kié ébuaq̃k[296] mɛLɛ̨. étą sibutə ĩipo patkɛ̨mi. ɛ́ tsą́ kųLɛ́itsúk.

2. ĩipo mią i-tsą́ kųLɛ́isúk. étą i-mią tsak.[297] emɛ́ kéwą iujchenɛ, tə[298] i-ruə́wami. buLame-tą sibutə ichake i-ą́tə, "ɜ̃ə-ruə́wąmi?"

3. ĩipo iq̃té, "tə́ bu-ruə́wąmi." ɛ́ kuɛgi sibutə ĩipo jkə́ tuwą i-wobLar kə́chak.

18. biɜ̃obLə-kar-keLi[299]

1. ɛ̨matą́ sɛ̃mį́ uiąchə́.
sɛ̃mį́ itsə́ tsą̃k wɛ̨ sɛ̃rə́ ibLə́kwą,
ɛ̨ itsųk mɛLɛ̨.

2. də́-mɛLɛ̨ wɛ̨lke,[300] étą sɛ̃mí̃ketkɛ́ tsak itsə́ wə́s.

[195] [756]

[291] "Thinkers" signifies "medicine men."
[292] Medicine man's term.
[293] The sense of this is that the tobacco was grown near where *sibu* was.
[294] This is a medicine man's term used in theological tales or songs. In lay tales or when talking *ɨ̃ɨ́* means "land" or "earth."
[295] This word is a combination of *kųLɨ́* (to cure) and *itsö́* or *itsö́t* (to sing). Singing is an important aspect of curing and the two words are often used as one to denote curing.
[296] This only means to cure.
[297] The lay word "to sing" is *tsą́t* or *tsak*.
[298] *ə* here in front of *i* signifies "if."
[299] The Bribri consider this title as one word signifying the songs of the medicine man at night to his staff. The complete phrase is equivalent to "the staff of the medicine men."
[300] *ɛ* is "house." This word means "within the house."

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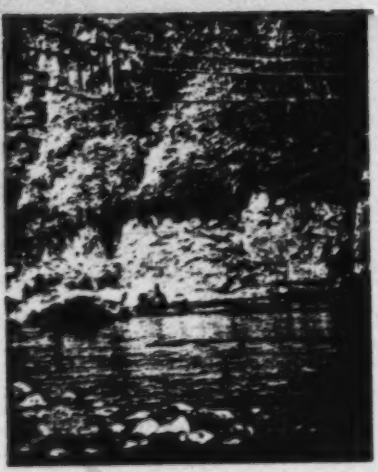

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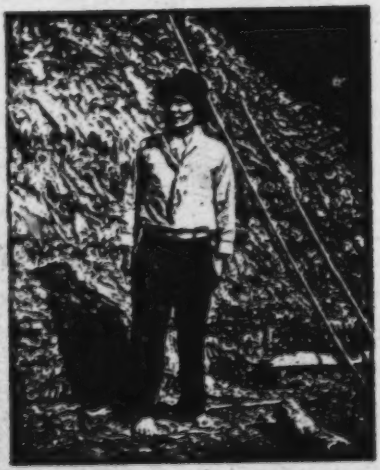


d

a, Vino bridge, Alto Talamanca (photograph courtesy of Gonzalo Martinez). b, Articles to accompany the dead at first burial, Cabécar, Alto Coen. c, Cabécar medicine man with staff, Talamanca. d, Bribri medicine man, Talamanca.

[END PLATE 10]

6: Stone E-5 (1956-1959) 1962

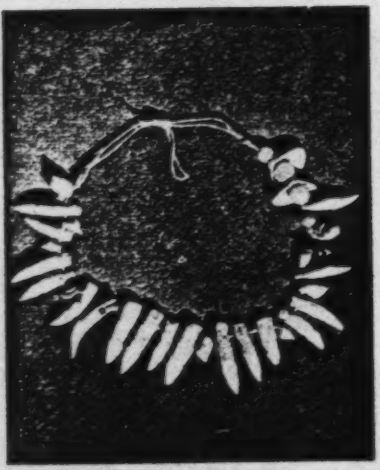
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Cabecar
Bribri

532
756
778
[172]

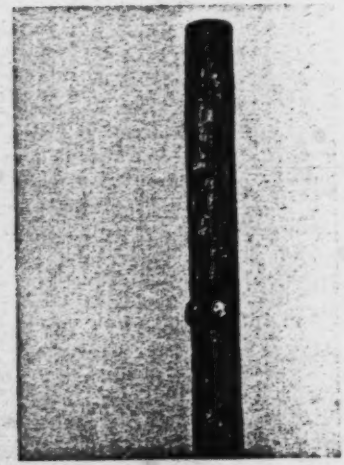
a

b

301
789
H1



c



d

a, Ceremonial staff from cache on slopes of Irazú volcano, Central Plateau. b, Ceremonial staff from Talamanca, late 19th century (property of Don Otón Jiménez L.). c, Cabécar necklace of jaguar teeth, shells, bone, and beads to ward off evil (property of Don Julio Calleja T.). d, Part of Cabécar blow gun with beads sights.

[END PLATE 11]